

## Good Preaching

Luke 3:7-14

In this text we are presented with John the Baptist “preaching” for the first time. There are some great lessons in this text for all ‘Baptist’ preachers about the appropriate way for us to proclaim the Kingdom.

### I. Good preaching confronts presumption.

John the Baptists’ first recorded words are “O generation vipers” - literally, ‘descendants of vipers.’ He’s not winning the Norman Vincent Peale award for “How to make friends and influence people.” The viper appears very beautiful outwardly, but it is full of poison; it looks harmless and innocent for its teeth are hidden; it looks as if it could do no harm, but it is a deadly creature. The people to whom John is speaking are the Pharisees and Sadducees; to the religious people of Israel (see Matthew 3:9). The word Pharisee means “*to divide, or to breach.*” It comes from the Hebrew word *pharatz* (see the name Phares in Genesis 38:29). It has the idea of “dividing oneself from another,” that is, *‘To set one up at a distance from others; particularly with an air of superiority.’* Sadducees were just like them.

The Pharisees, according to the Talmud, had seven ‘sorts’ of groups. I won’t describe all seven, but will give three examples of them to let you see how they best describe the religious leaders:

- (1). **“The dashing Pharisee”** - who walks gently, the heel of one foot touching the great toe of the other; *scarcely lifting his feet from the earth*, so that he **dashes** them against the stones, causing people to think he is in deep meditation. The Pharisees wished to be seen as deeply spiritual.
- (2). **“The mourning Pharisee”** - who walked in a perpetual state of mourning, frowning constantly to display displeasure and despair over the condition of the world; that is, the wickedness of others.
- (3). **“The bleeding Pharisee”** - who makes as if he shut his eyes, *that he may not look upon women*, and so runs and dashes his head against the wall, till *the blood gushes out*, to reflect devotion. John called them out for the **outward perception given** with no **inward principle guiding**, and for their **vocal** deploring of the very things they were simultaneously and privately doing.

### II. Good preaching expects transformation.

*“Therefore, bear fruits in keeping with repentance”* (v. 8). *“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire”* (v. 9). Jesus Christ is appointed both Savior and Lord (Acts 2:36).

(A). **God’s character demands it** - Fruit is a common theme of conversion. We reflect the nature of Him who has given us birth. The fruit of the Spirit in us reflects His character; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23).

(B). **God’s power performs it** - *“God is able to raise these stones to be Abraham’s children”* (v. 8) He who began a good work in me will carry it on to completion (Phil. 1:6). We expect **God to accomplish this** in us; therefore, *“Examine yourselves to see if you be in the faith”* (II Cor. 13:5).

### III. Good preaching offers application.

It’s fascinating that John gives the principle: “Offer fruits of repentance - don’t be presumptuous,” and it is only after the people come to him with specific questions that he offers application, and the application varied. This is why in teaching you give the principle; in discipleship, the application.

**To the common people** John said, “Carry a tunic an extra mile” (love, kindness, goodness).

**To the tax collector** John said, “Don’t charge more than is due” (faithfulness, self-control, peace).

**To the soldiers** John said, “Don’t take anything by force and be content” (gentleness, joy patience).

Do you wish to ask, “What do I do?” Good. Get connected. Tell your story. Let people disciple you.